



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor



Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

**Request for Responses (RFR)**

**for the**

**Secure Jobs Initiative**

**PLEASE NOTE: This Word document is one of many documents that together with the RFR attachments comprise the entire Solicitation published on Comm-PASS. All Bidders are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements found on all Comm-PASS tabs for the entire Solicitation.**

**The terms of 801 CMR 21.00, Procurement of Commodities and Services are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Contract and Fiscal Requirement terms used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00.**

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**Response Submission Deadline:** **March 7, 2014 by 3:00 PM**

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## SECTION I: RFR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. DESCRIPTION

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The Department of Housing and Community Development seeks to provide funding for partnerships between homeless services, workforce development, and child care agencies. This initiative will build off the experiences of the privately-funded Secure Jobs initiative that was piloted in five regions of the state in 2013. These partnership models demonstrate how greater coordination and local innovation can improve the Commonwealth's ability to end family homelessness.

Partnerships funded through this RFR will match homeless families with services to help them overcome barriers to work, and connect them with suitable employers in jobs with career pathways.

### B. TARGET POPULATION

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All interventions and services funded through this RFR must serve households that are (1) at-risk of homelessness and being served through the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, (2) homeless and participating in the Emergency Assistance (EA) program, *or* (3) have been recently rehoused or stabilized through the HomeBASE program.

### C. SCOPE OF SERVICES

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DHCD expects all proposed partnerships to integrate the following activities into their responses to this RFR.

1. Accurately assess the employability and interest of each participant, removing barriers to employment (such as lack of child care services), and securing the best possible job for each participant (including job stability, access to a career pathway, and fringe benefits).
2. Coordinate with Regional Housing Nonprofits, EA shelter providers and Regional Networks to End Homelessness.
3. Maintain and enhance strong relationships with employers who will strongly consider hiring participants within the grant period.
4. Commit to the system coordination and reform required to increase access to employment for participant households and serve as a model for broader system reform initiatives.

5. Provide regular communication between housing and employment partners. Employment workers and stabilization workers should meet regularly and stay in constant contact by phone and email to discuss each participant's progress and challenges he or she may face.
6. Each site must create a curriculum for Job Readiness Training that best suits its participants.
7. Employment specialists must offer career counseling to all participants to ensure they embark on a promising and appropriate path.
8. Secure Jobs partnerships must also establish relationships with area employers, either through dedicated job development staff or through partner organizations, such as Career Centers.
9. Retention services must include continued case management, monthly peer network support groups, and cash incentives to stay employed.
10. Quality data is important for program management and evaluation. Partners must identify common data needs and elements, and create a common database in which to enter participant-level data.

#### **D. FUNDING**

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1. **Funding Available:** DHCD currently has \$1 million available to fund Secure Jobs. Contract duration and or any extensions granted would be subject to appropriation, and all payments must be made within duration of grant funding.
2. **Number of Awards:** DHCD anticipates funding up to five (5) Secure Jobs partnerships across the Commonwealth. No more than one partnership will be funded in the following regions of the Commonwealth: Metro Boston, North Shore/Merrimack Valley, South Shore, South Coast/Cape and Islands, Central, and Western MA.
3. **Distribution of Funding**
  - a. Funding will be distributed based on the scoring criteria described in **Section III (B) (IV)** below.
  - b. Grants will not exceed \$250,000.
  - c. Grantees will be paid under a cost reimbursement method upon completion of specific milestones or benchmarks, which will be established and identified in each individual contract. Invoices may be submitted to DHCD as frequently as

once monthly, and must include back-up documentation showing that services were rendered.

## **E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

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1. **Leveraging:** Applicants are encouraged to leverage resources for the activities of the Secure Jobs partnerships. All grantees will be responsible for providing proof of resources leveraged as part of this RFR.
2. DHCD strongly encourages the Secure Jobs partnerships to work closely with the affordable housing system to leverage partnership opportunities and resources through the relevant housing planning processes (e.g., Consolidated Plan, Continuum of Care, Plan to End Homelessness, etc.) and to leverage access to housing resources and support (e.g., rental and operating subsidies, set-asides, security deposits, etc.) with the Local Housing Authority, housing owners and developers, realtors, etc.
3. DHCD encourages the Secure Jobs partnerships to leverage those mainstream services to support tenants in maintaining housing stability and increasing self-sufficiency. These services could include health and behavioral health services, child welfare services, early education and childcare services, and economic self-sufficiency services.

## **F. REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS**

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1. **Regional Partnerships.** New or existing regional partnerships of multiple organizations (including one lead organization) that together will increase employment among participant households by re-envisioning how service delivery agencies and systems can work together effectively and efficiently; engaging multiple partners and other stakeholders to conduct business differently and eliminate barriers and disincentives to employment; and operationalizing coordinated assessment, decision-making, and referral by streamlining each family's access to appropriate services delivered by the right provider(s) at the right times and locations. The lead organization in the partnership will be experienced in delivering workforce development services, with an excellent track record of placing formerly homeless and/or very low income parents into jobs, working relationships with multiple employers, and demonstrated ability to work with HomeBASE, RAFT, and EA shelter providers to co-manage participants. Applicants may request that a partner other than the workforce provider serve as the lead organization, but must provide a narrative justification as to why an alternative would be improve

outcomes. It will be an advantage to bidders when the relevant ICHH Regional Network to End Homelessness and Regional Housing Nonprofit(s) are full and active members of the partnership; one or more partners has an Employment Services Program and/or SNAP Employment & Training Program contract with the Department of Transitional Assistance; at least one local Department of Early Education and Care-funded provider which is engaged with Ages and Stages and EEC's Early Childhood Information System is an active member of the partnership; and a partnership proposes a feasible and innovative peer support network as part of Secure Jobs services.

2. **Advisory Committee.** A Secure Jobs Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly and include representatives of Secure Jobs providers, state agency partners, representatives of the ICHH Regional Networks to End Homelessness and their Leadership Councils, Regional Housing Nonprofits, EA shelter providers, and other local private and public sector partners. The Committee will serve as a Learning Community that will share updates and lessons learned as Secure Jobs projects are implemented, identify what new policies and practices will work best to increase employment for participants, and share information with policymakers, regional organizations, and the homelessness and workforce development sectors.

## **G. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT**

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1. **Contract Duration:** Contracts are anticipated to begin on or around April 22, 2014 and end on June 30, 2015, and are subject to appropriation and availability of sufficient funds under the funding authority.
2. **Options to Extend:** Contract extensions may be available, not to exceed 12 months. Extensions will be negotiated with grantees on an individual case-by-case basis.
3. **Options to Amend:** Any elements of performances within the scope of services may be negotiated and amended, which results in a better value than original RFR responses. All amendments are subject to state finance law requirements and available funding.
4. **Options to Cancel:** The Department of Housing and Community Development at any time prior to execution of the contract and without penalty may cancel a grant application upon notice to potential grantees.

## **H. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND MONITORING**

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1. Grantees will be required to participate in an evaluation process that will include data sharing, learning labs, and a series of check-in calls.
2. In addition to the reporting requirements described above, DHCD will monitor compliance through field visits and desk top reviews of information submitted, including but not limited to the submission of payment invoices, corrective action plans on the performance of the RFR terms and requirements and all other issues that may come up during the contract duration.

## SECTION II: BACKGROUND

In 2013, DHCD partnered with the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation, the Department of Early Education and Care, and the Department of Transitional Assistance to support the Secure Jobs demonstration program. Five partnerships were funded across the Commonwealth that brought together homeless and workforce development agencies, along with state agencies. The demonstration targeted families participating in the HomeBASE Rental Assistance program, many with TANF as their sole source of income. By connecting housing and workforce development services, Secure Jobs offered comprehensive support families needed to obtain employment. The Secure Jobs partnerships also established the organizing structure to make new connections with other area resources that homeless families need to gain and maintain full-time work. The initial evaluation of the Secure Jobs demonstration found that the program is the right fit for parents who are ready, willing and able to work, and that individualized service delivery is critical to success. Further, providing real connections to employers allowed participants to secure jobs, and strong retention services helped participants stay employed.

DHCD is committed to continuing to support stabilization efforts of the families it serves through the Emergency Assistance shelter system, HomeBASE, and RAFT programs. As such, this RFR will deepen DHCD's involvement in ensuring homeless and recently rehoused families are able to access the employment and work supports they need to achieve housing stability and success for their families.



## SECTION III. RESPONSE, EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORECARD

### A. CONTENT OF RESPONSES

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#### PART I: NARRATIVE RESPONSE

Please respond to each question below in a narrative of **no more than seven (7) pages**. See **Section V** for more details on specifications of response.

##### **I. Lead Organization and Partnership Capacity**

Required Responses:

- a. Describe the lead organization's ability to build and motivate a regional partnership effectively, to facilitate the movement of families through multiple arenas, and to design and implement innovative and highly effective programs. If the proposed lead organization is not the workforce provider, provide a narrative justification as to why an alternative has been selected and how that will improve outcomes.
- b. Describe the lead organization's history of working with employers. Include the number of job placements you have made and the timeframe within which they were made. Also include the employer engagement strategies you will use and the tasks, timelines, and lead responsibilities during the grant period.
- c. Describe plans to partner with the local Regional Network to End Homelessness, EA shelter providers and Regional Housing Nonprofit(s).
- d. Describe the organization of your partnership, the roles of each organization in the partnership, and how the partnership will operate. Include an outline of the proposed staffing pattern to provide services. Please specify the FTE for each staff position, the organization for which they will be working, and whether it will be a new hire.
- e. Describe the major project implementation activities and benchmarks, indicating when each starts and ends, and who holds responsibility for each.
- f. Describe anticipated changes within your member organizations due to the partnership.

- g.** Outline the strategies you will employ to identify and overcome barriers to success and scarcity of resources (e.g., access to transportation; access to child care; lack of motivation to work; lack of skill training slots; staff capacity).

## **II. Proposed Services and Outcomes**

### **Required Responses:**

- a.** Provide a clear, participant-centered overview of proposed services and outcomes. Include when and where services will be delivered, the projected number of participants receiving the service, how much/how often the service will be provided individually or in a group, and which organization and staff member(s) will provide each service.
- b.** Describe your proposed methods of outreach and recruitment.
- c.** Describe how you will assess, select, intake, and initiate services with participants.
- d.** Describe the process you will use to develop an employment action plan for each participant.
- e.** Provide information about any innovative approaches you will use to remove barriers and overcome scarcity of services and resources?
- f.** Describe the methods you will use for case management, counseling, and related services.
- g.** Describe the instruments and processes you will use to assess job readiness and increase job readiness skills. Include a projected number of participants who will receive job readiness services, and describe the areas of knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that job readiness will cover.
- h.** Describe your process for determining which participants are referred to skill training, how you will identify the most appropriate referral for each participant, and how you will balance the costs of skill training versus the need for and cost of other services.

- i. Outline how you will organize and deliver job search, job matching, and/or job placement services.
- j. Provide a target number of participants you will enroll, the number of participants who will obtain jobs, and the number of participants who will retain jobs for one year.

### **III. Leveraging Of Resources And Sustainability**

Required Responses:

- a. Complete and attach the Leveraged Resources Table below for all cash and in-kind resources. (This attachment will not count towards the 7-page limit.)

**LEVERAGED RESOURCES TABLE**

<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Description of Contribution</b>	<b>Value of Written Commitment</b>

**Instructions:** Leveraged items may include any commitments that will be used towards the Secure Jobs partnership activities. Examples of leveraged resources could include flexible funds, transportation passes, training slots, childcare, equipment, materials, services, volunteer time, etc.

The contribution may be leveraged through federal, state, local, or private sources, including mainstream housing and social service programs. Donated professional services should be valued at the customary rate; volunteer time should be valued at \$10 per hour.

## **PART II: BUDGET RESPONSE**

### **I. Budget Form Instructions**

- a. Complete and attach a detailed budget showing sources and uses.
- b. Distinguish administrative, infrastructure and client resource allocations.

### **II. Budget Justification**

Provide a narrative justification of the sources and uses included in the proposed budget.

### **III. Funding Restrictions**

No more than 15 percent of a funding award can be used by a Secure Jobs partnership to support administrative expenses.

## **B. EVALUATION**

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Responses will be evaluated as follows:

### **I. Compliance with Submission Requirements:**

The Procurement Management Team (PMT) will first review each response to determine if it satisfies all RFR submission requirements. A response that does not meet the basic submission requirements identified in Section I or does not comply with other RFR requirement's may be considered non-responsive and be disqualified without further evaluation.

If time permits the PMT may, at its discretion, determine that noncompliance is insubstantial and can be corrected, or that an alternative proposed by the respondent is an acceptable substitute. In such case the PMT may seek clarification, allow the respondent to make minor corrections, apply appropriate penalties in the evaluation, or apply a combination of all three remedies. A respondent that is currently debarred or does not sign the required attachments **shall** be disqualified. A respondent that was previously debarred, but is not presently debarred, may be

disqualified if the PMT concludes that the circumstances of the debarment would render the respondent inappropriate as a provider of the proposed services.

## **II. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP)**

**PLEASE NOTE: FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS RFR, PARTICIPATION IN THE SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM IS OPTIONAL FOR PROVIDERS REQUESTING A COMBINED TOTAL OF LESS THAN \$150,000 ACROSS ALL FUNDING CATEGORIES. PARTICIPATION IS MANDATORY FOR PROVIDERS REQUESTING A COMBINED TOTAL THAT EXCEEDS \$150,000 ACROSS ALL FUNDING CATEGORIES AND IS SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH BELOW.**

Massachusetts Executive Order established a policy to promote the award of State Contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens businesses certified as Minority and/or Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) by the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO), formerly known as the State Office for Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA). As a result, M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit bid responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or subcontractors. All Bidders, regardless of their certification status, are required to submit a completed SDP Plan Form as part of their response for evaluation. It is required that Supplier Diversity Program participation accounts for no less than 10% of the total points in the evaluation. Higher evaluation points may be awarded to SDP Plans that show more commitments for use of certified vendors in the primary industry directly related to the scope of the RFR, subcontracting expenditures and partnerships for the purpose of contracting with the Commonwealth.

DHCD **requires** bidders to make a significant commitment to partner with certified Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses in order to be awarded a contract. An SDO-certified Bidder (formerly known as SOWMBA-certified) may not list itself as being a Supplier Diversity Program Partner to its own company. All certified businesses that are included in the bidder's SDP proposal are required to submit an up-to-date copy of their M/WBE certification letter. In addition, a narrative statement can be included to supplement the SDP Plan Form providing further details of the SDP commitments. The submission of this narrative statement does not replace the requirement of the SDP Plan Form. Bidders must submit one form for each M/WBE SDP Relationship. **Please note that no bidder will be awarded a contract unless and until they agree to commit to at least one (1) of following three (3) SDP components:**

1. **Subcontracting:** If Bidder commits to Subcontracting in their SDP plan, then they must commit to subcontract a specific dollar amount, or a minimum percentage of dollars earned through an awarded contract, with a SDO-certified company. Although this is only one of several options to meet the requirements for participation in the Supplier Diversity Program, Bidder's submission of subcontracting commitments may be weighted most heavily. DHCD will set timelines for progress reviews (either quarterly or semi-annually) for the purpose of compliance and tracking of submitted commitments. Please note that all subcontracting partnerships require inclusion of that contract between the Bidder and the M/WBE subcontractor in the Bidder's bid package.
2. **Ancillary Uses of Certified M/WBE Firm(s):** If a Bidder commits to Ancillary Uses of certified M/WBE firm in their SDP plan, then they must include dollar or percentage expenditure commitments for use of these firm(s) with or without the use of written commitments between the Bidder and the M/WBE Firm(s). A description of the ancillary uses of certified M/WBEs, if any, must be included on the SDP Plan Form. Ancillary services are generally not directly related to the core services or commodity being delivered. As an example, a bidder providing consulting services who purchases office supplies or equipment maintenance from a SDO-certified company is an example of an ancillary agreement.
3. **Growth & Development:** If a Bidder commits to Growth and Development in their SDP plan, then they must submit a plan with expenditure commitments for education, training, mentoring, resource sharing, joint activities, and assistance that would increase industry capacity and the pool of qualified SDO-certified companies.

Once an SDP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, DHCD will then monitor the contractor's performance.

**Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential M/WBE partners can be found on the [Supplier Diversity Program website](#).**

### **III. Evaluation of Qualified Responses:**

The PMT will operate under the direction of the Associate Director of the Division of Housing Stabilization and staff. The PMT will evaluate responses using the following ratings and point system:

Good (85-100 Points): The response reflects an understanding of the level of need in its area for the proposed service, the specific population it plans to serve, and the issues it will encounter in providing services, satisfies all RFR requirements and exceeds the RFR requirements in at least three of the criteria listed below.

Satisfactory (65-84 Points): The response reflects an understanding of the population it plans to serve, the issues it will encounter in providing services, and satisfies all RFR requirements.

Unsatisfactory (0-64 Points): The response does not reflect an understanding of the issues involved, the RFR, and/or does not satisfy all of the basic requirements.

Input from additional DHCD program and fiscal staff may be requested from the PMT as questions arise. The PMT will complete a single evaluation form for each response that reflects the consensus.

### **IV. Evaluation Criteria**

Preference will be given to respondents who: 1. demonstrate substantial experience and a superior understanding of the needs of the Secure Jobs program; and 2. clearly demonstrate how the proposed services comply with the requirements of DHCD and how the respondent will meet the performance measures established within their response. Using the point values listed below, the review committee will arrive at an overall rating for each response.

#### **1. Structure and Quality of Secure Jobs Partnership and Capacity of Lead Organization (40 PTS.)**

Responses will be scored on their partner agencies' experience in working with employers and achieving measurable results. Respondents will be evaluated on the experience of key management staff, and their ability to articulate the roles and responsibilities those staff would assume if funded. The respondent will be evaluated on the clarity of the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the Secure Jobs partnership, as well as the clarity of strategies they would use to overcome barriers and the history of success in this area.

**2. Implementation, Leveraging of Resources and Sustainability (30 PTS.)**

Responses will be evaluated on the breadth and clarity of the service package they propose. Responses will be scored on the existence of clear processes and methods for key service areas that address the requirements in the RFR's Scope of Services (Section I. (C.)). Points will also be awarded based on the amount and type of leveraged resources, indicating the strong support from the community and key stakeholders.

**3. Budget and Performance Measures (20 PTS.)**

Responses will be evaluated on the scope of participants to be served and the level of outcomes proposed. Respondents will also be evaluated on the average cost per outcomes. Preference will be given to Respondents that demonstrate their ability to achieve substantial measurable outcomes by maximizing the funding available and requested.

**4. Participation in the Supplier Diversity Program (10 PTS.)**

If applicable, preference will be given to Respondents with substantial Supplier Diversity Program participation as described in Section III.B. of the RFR.

**Scoring Summary:**

<b>1. Structure and Quality of Secure Jobs Partnerships and Capacity of Lead Organization</b>	<b>40 points</b>
<b>2. Implementation, Leveraging of Resources and Sustainability</b>	<b>30 points</b>
<b>3. Budget and Performance Measures</b>	<b>20 points</b>
<b>4. Participation in the Supplier Diversity Program</b>	<b>10 points</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>



## **V. Selection**

Final decisions will be posted on Comm-PASS. All respondents will be notified of the final funding awards. Once the successful respondents have been notified of their selection, DHCD or its Designee will begin negotiations, as needed, with successful respondents to reach a contractual agreement. Negotiations are limited to terms and conditions specifically addressed in the RFR and the respondent's response and/or to matters that do not significantly alter such documents and may include issues with the budget. If DHCD fails within a reasonable length of time to reach agreement with a selected respondent, it may disqualify that respondent.

## **VI. Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Department**

Non-successful respondents may request a debriefing from DHCD. Written requests for a debriefing must be sent by first class mail addressed to the contact person listed in the RFR, and must be received by DHCD within 14 days of the notification of respondent selection. Non-successful respondents aggrieved by the decision of DHCD must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to a request for review by the DHCD Undersecretary or his designee.

The basis for a request for review by the Undersecretary is limited to the following: (1) the competitive procurement conducted failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These are limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the *Procurement Policies and Procedures Handbook*, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD and the specifications of the RFR; or (2) There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The burden of proof rests with the respondent to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of their claim. Pending requests to the DHCD Undersecretary for review shall not prohibit DHCD from proceeding with executing contracts. Request for review must be sent to the attention of the DHCD Undersecretary, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300, Boston, MA 02114 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the debriefing.

## SECTION IV: GENERAL PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* (and *808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services*, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

Items with the text, "*☞ Required for POS Only*" specify a requirement for Purchase of Service (POS) human and social services procured under *801 CMR 21.00, Procurement of Commodities or Services, Including Human and Social Services* and *808 CMR 1.00, Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Service*.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. All bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor's inclusion of M/WBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder's participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor's performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified contractors to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

This RFR will contain some or all of the following components as part of the Supplier Diversity Program Plan submitted by bidders:

- Sub-contracting with certified M/WBE firms as defined within the scope of the RFR,
- Ancillary use of certified M/WBE firms,
- Growth and Development activities to increase M/WBE capacity,

A Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), M/Non-Profit, or W/Non-Profit, is defined as such by the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO). All certified businesses that are included in the bidder's SDP proposal are required to submit an up to date copy of their SDO certification letter. The purpose for this certification is to participate in the Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Program for public contracting. Minority- and Women-Owned firms that are not currently certified but would like to be considered as an M/WBE for the purpose of this RFR should submit their application at least two weeks prior to the RFR closing date and submit proof of documentation of application for consideration with their bid proposal. For further information on SDO certification, contact their office at 1-617-502-8851 or via the Internet at [mass.gov/SDO](http://mass.gov/SDO).

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the agency is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Agencies may define required deliverables including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing compliance of subcontracting commitments made in a bidder's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors.

Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products) - Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest

products, the raising of livestock, including horses, raising of domesticated animals, bees, fur-bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Procurement Management Team (PMT) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The PMT and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the PMT regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS. Comm-PASS is the official system of record for all procurement information which is publicly accessible at no charge at [www.comm-pass.com](http://www.comm-pass.com). Information contained in this document and in each tab of the Solicitation, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bidders' Forum(s), are all components of the Solicitation.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Solicitation via Comm-PASS, by using the free Browse and Search tools offered on each record-related tab on the main navigation bar (Solicitations and Forums). Forums support Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Solicitation and publication of official answers. All records on Comm-PASS are comprised of multiple tabs, or pages. For example, Solicitation records contain Summary, Rules, Issuer(s), Intent or Forms & Terms and Specifications, and Other Information tabs. Each tab contains data and/or file attachments provided by the Procurement Management Team. All are incorporated into the Solicitation.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check Comm-PASS for:

- Any addenda or modifications to this Solicitation, by monitoring the "Last Change" field on the Solicitation's Summary tab, and
- Any Bidders' Forum records related to this Solicitation (see Locating an Online Bidders' Forum for information on locating these records.)

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Response based on an out-of-date Solicitation or on information received from a source other than Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS SmartBid Subscription. Bidders may elect to obtain an optional SmartBid subscription which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to Comm-PASS records. When properly configured and managed, SmartBid provides a subscriber with:

- A secure desktop within Comm-PASS for efficient record management
- A customizable profile reflecting the subscriber's product/service areas of interest
- A customizable listing in the publicly accessible Business Directory, an online "yellow-pages" advertisement
- Full-cycle, automated email alert whenever any record of interest is posted or updated
- Access to Online Response Submission, when allowed by the Issuer, to support:
  - paperless bid drafting and submission to an encrypted lock-box prior to close date
  - electronic signature of OSD forms and terms; agreement to defer wet-ink signature until Contract award, if any
  - withdrawal of submitted bids prior to close date
  - online storage of submitted bids

Every public purchasing entity within the borders of Massachusetts may post records on Comm-PASS at no charge. Comm-PASS has the potential to become the sole site for all public entities in Massachusetts. SmartBid fees are only based on and expended for costs to operate, maintain and develop the Comm-PASS system.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial

selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

Debriefing. *☞ Required for POS Only. This is an optional specification for non-POS RFRs.* Non-successful bidders may request a debriefing from the department. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Departments. *☞ Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the debriefing process and remain aggrieved with the decision of the department may appeal that decision to the department head. Department appeal procedures may be found in the RFR.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to OSD. *☞ Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the department appeal process and remain aggrieved by the selection decision of the department may appeal the department decision to the Operational Services Division. The basis for an appeal to OSD is limited to the following grounds:

1. The competitive procurement conducted by the department failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These would be limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the policies in the OSD Procurement Information Center, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD and the specifications of the RFR; or
2. There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The allegation of unfairness or bias is one that is easier to allege than prove, consequently, the burden of proof rests with the bidder to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of its claim. OSD will presume that departments conducted a fair procurement absent documentation to the contrary.

Requests for an appeal must be sent to the attention of the State Purchasing Agent at Room 1017,

One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the postmark of the notice of the department head's decision on appeal. Appeal requests must specify in sufficient detail the basis for the appeal. Sufficient detail requires a description of the published policy or procedure which was applied and forms the basis for the appeal and presentation of all information that supports the claim under paragraphs 1 or 2 above. OSD reserves the right to reject appeal requests based on grounds other than those stated above or those submitted without sufficient detail on the basis for the appeal.

The decision of the State Purchasing Agent shall be rendered, in writing, setting forth the grounds for the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. Pending appeals to the State Purchasing Agent shall not prohibit the department from proceeding with executing contracts.

Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the PMT, including requests for clarification. The PMT and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the PMT to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors are able to track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. A link to the EFT application can be found on the [OSD Forms](http://www.mass.gov/osd) page ([www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd)). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](http://www.mass.gov/osc) site ([www.mass.gov/osc](http://www.mass.gov/osc)). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The PMT will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the bidder.

Environmental Response Submission Compliance. In an effort to promote greater use of recycled and environmentally preferable products and minimize waste, all responses submitted should comply with the following guidelines:

- All copies should be printed double sided.
- All submittals and copies should be printed on recycled paper with a minimum post-consumer content of 30% or on tree-free paper (i.e. paper made from raw materials other than trees, such as kenaf). To document the use of such paper, a photocopy of the ream cover/wrapper should be included with the response.
- Unless absolutely necessary, all responses and copies should minimize or eliminate use of non-recyclable or non-re-usable materials such as plastic report covers, plastic dividers, vinyl sleeves and GBC binding. Three ringed binders, glued materials, paper clips and staples are acceptable.
- Bidders should submit materials in a format which allows for easy removal and recycling of paper materials.
- Bidders are encouraged to use other products which contain recycled content in their response documents. Such products may include, but are not limited to, folders, binders, paper clips, diskettes, envelopes, boxes, etc. Where appropriate, bidders should note which products in their responses are made with recycled materials.



- Unnecessary samples, attachments or documents not specifically asked for should not be submitted.

Executive Order 509, *Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies*. Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009 that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Executive Order # 509 Guidance](#).

Filing Requirements. *☞ Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Successful bidders must have filed their Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR), as required for current contractors, with the Operational Services Division via the Internet using the UFR eFiling application for the most recently completed fiscal year before a contract can be executed and services may begin. Other contractor qualification/risk management reporting requirements and non-filing consequences promulgated by secretariats or departments pursuant to 808 CMR 1.04(3) may also apply. In the event immediate services are required by a department, a contract may be executed and services may begin with the approval of OSD and the appropriate secretariat. However, unless authorized by OSD and the appropriate secretariat, the contractor will not be paid for any such services rendered until the UFR has been filed.

HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement

administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

Minimum Bid Duration. Bidders responses/bids made in response to this RFR must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of bid submission.

Pricing: Price Limitation: The bidder must agree that no other state or public entity customer within the United States of similar size and with similar terms and conditions shall receive a lower price for the same commodity and service during the contract period, unless this same lower price is immediately effective for the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth believes that it is not receiving this lower price as required by this language, the bidder must agree to provide current or historical pricing offered or negotiated with other state or public entities at any time during the contract period in the absence of proprietary information being part of such contracts.

Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically can be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form can be found under the Forms and Terms tab of this solicitation.

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the PMT. The PMT will review, negotiate or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

Provider Data Management. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) has established a Provider Data Management (PDM) business service that is integrated into the Virtual Gateway. PDM is accessible by providers with current POS contracts. Departments may require that bidders with current POS contracts submit certain RFR-required documents through PDM. These documents have been specified in the RFR. When submitting documents via PDM, bidders are required to print and sign a PDM Documentation Summary. PDM users should verify that all information is accurate and current in PDM. Bidders are required to include the signed PDM Documentation Summary in their RFR response.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The PMT reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the

Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

## SECTION V: SPECIFICATONS OF RESPONSE

### A. RFR RESPONSE SUBMISSION

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1. Responses must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7, 2014. Responses received after 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7, 2014 will not be disqualified.
2. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by courier, or mailed to:

James Lay

Department of Housing and Community Development

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300

Boston, MA 02114

**RESPONDENTS MUST ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO HAVE THEIR RESPONSE  
TIME STAMPED BY 3:00 PM.**

**RESPONSES NOT RECEIVED AND TIME STAMPED AT THE DESIGNATED  
ADDRESS BY 3:00 PM, MARCH 7, 2014 WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

### B. RESPONSE SPECIFICATIONS

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1. Responses must be printed on plain 8½ x 11 inch white paper, single-sided, in 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1 inch margins. All pages should be numbered and must be clearly and consistently labeled with the Lead Organization name on each page.
2. Please submit one (1) original and six (6) copies of all documents.
3. Please submit one (1) copy on a portable drive.
5. The Response shall include the following:
  - a. **Narrative:** The narrative section of the Response should answer those questions described in Section III. The narrative may not be longer than seven (7) pages. Ensure that each question is addressed thoroughly, yet concisely within the page limit. The Budget Form and additional required forms and attachments will not count towards the page limit. Any pages over the 7-page limit will be disregarded.

d. **Budget Form and Justification**

c. **Additional required forms, appendices and attachments** specified in Section III, IV and V, including:

**Required Attachments:**

- i. List of all partnership member agencies.
- ii. Letters of support from the local Regional Network to End Homelessness, Regional Housing Nonprofit(s), EA shelter providers and two employers.
- iii. Leveraged Resources table
- iv. **ADDITIONAL REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FROM Comm-PASS:** All required RFR forms are incorporated by reference and published on the Forms and Terms tab of the Comm-PASS solicitation page for the Document Number DHCD2014-07S. The following list describes each form, and includes an action description for each. There are only two (2) forms that **MUST** be returned as part of the response package, as noted below, three (3) for non-public entities.

<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Action Description</b>
Massachusetts Substitute W-9 Form	Complete form and submit with response package
Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing	Complete form and submit with response package
Certificate of Good Standing and/or Tax Compliance	<b>NON-PUBLIC ENTITIES ONLY:</b> Obtain and submit with response package
Standard Contract Form	FOR REVIEW: Execute only upon contract award
Commonwealth Terms & Conditions	FOR REVIEW: Execute only upon contract award
Authorization for Electronic Funds Transfer	FOR REVIEW: Execute only upon contract award

## C. PROCEDURES FOR WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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Questions may be submitted by email to James Lay at [james.lay@state.ma.us](mailto:james.lay@state.ma.us) by **February 14, 2014**. Only written questions will be permitted. DHCD will publish written responses to all questions on Comm-PASS by **February 21, 2014**.

## I. APPENDIX 1: RFR CHECKLIST

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Please complete this section by hand as your last step in your response or have someone else go through your response to ensure that all required documentation/attachments are included.

1. ☐ Completed Checklist
2. ☐ Required Attachments (Not available on Comm-PASS)
  - ☐ List of Partnership Membership Agencies
  - ☐ Letters of Support
    - ☐ Regional Network to End Homelessness
    - ☐ Regional Housing Nonprofit(s)
    - ☐ EA Shelter Providers
    - ☐ Two Employers
  - ☐ Leveraged Resources Table
  - ☐ Sub-contracting documents (if respondent is a lead agency)
    - ☐ Plan for monitoring sub-contracts
    - ☐ Copy of the proposed sub-contract to be used
  - ☐ Copy of Annual Audit, if applicable
3. ☐ Comm-PASS Attachments
  - ☐ Massachusetts Substitute W-9 Form
  - ☐ Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
  - ☐ Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form (if applicable)
  - ☐ Authorization for Electronic Funds Transfer
  - ☐ Attachment 1: Program Cover Page
  - ☐ Attachment 2: Performance Measures
  - ☐ Attachment 3: Fiscal Year Program Budget. (One additional copy must be provided on a CD-ROM or a Flash Drive)
  - ☐ Attachment 4: Rate Calculation/Maximum Obligation Calculation Page
  - ☐ Attachment 5: Non-Reimbursable Cost Program Offset Schedule
  - ☐ Attachment 6: Capital Budget, if applicable
  - ☐ Commonwealth Terms & Conditions-Human and Social Services, if applicable
4. ☐ Letter of Transmittal



5. ☐ Debarment Statement
6. ☐ Narrative for Lead Organization and Partnership Capacity  
☐ Narrative for Proposed Services and Outcomes
7. ☐ Description of Proposed Program Costs Identified by Line